

SOME U.S. TROOPS OUT OF CAMBODIA

Several Companies Quit the
Sesan Area, Raising Total
Pullout Above 1,000
MAY 14 1970

By JAMES P. STERBA
Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 13—Several companies of American troops withdrew from Cambodia today after only a partial search of a North Vietnamese base area in the Sesan region of the Central Highlands west of Pleiku.

The pullout brought to more than 1,000 the number of American ground soldiers withdrawn from Cambodia in the last two days.

The withdrawals thus far have come from two areas of Cambodia. Directly west of Saigon in the Bathu cache site of the Parrot's Beak area, elements of the Third Brigade of the Ninth Infantry Division withdrew late yesterday.

Total Less Than 2,000

Today, military spokesmen said one-third of the United States forces involved in the Sesan operation in Cambodian territory west of Pleiku had been withdrawn. The total withdrawals still were less than 2,000.

[North Vietnamese forces assaulted an American artillery base Wednesday three miles inside Cambodia in an area northwest of the Fishhook, killing one American soldier and wounding eight. Fifty-nine of the enemy were killed. The attack was believed to have been the first major assault by Communist troops on a fortified United States position in Cambodia.]

The pullouts from Cambodia came as field commanders continued to express privately their need for more American and South Vietnamese forces to search occupied areas and

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More Than 1,000 G.I.'s Leave Cambodia

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to help defend captured enemy supply depots. North Vietnamese troops appeared to be moving back into some of these areas to contest the allied presence.

Yesterday in Washington, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird said that several thousand American troops had already been withdrawn from Cambodia and that more would be withdrawn during this week.

South Vietnamese military spokesmen said today that they had received information that 10 tanks of the Vietnamese Communist forces had been destroyed in Cambodia yesterday. The spokesmen said they did not know where the enemy tanks had been sighted, but if the reports are accurate, these were the heaviest pieces of enemy equipment encountered south of the northern section of the Central Highlands.

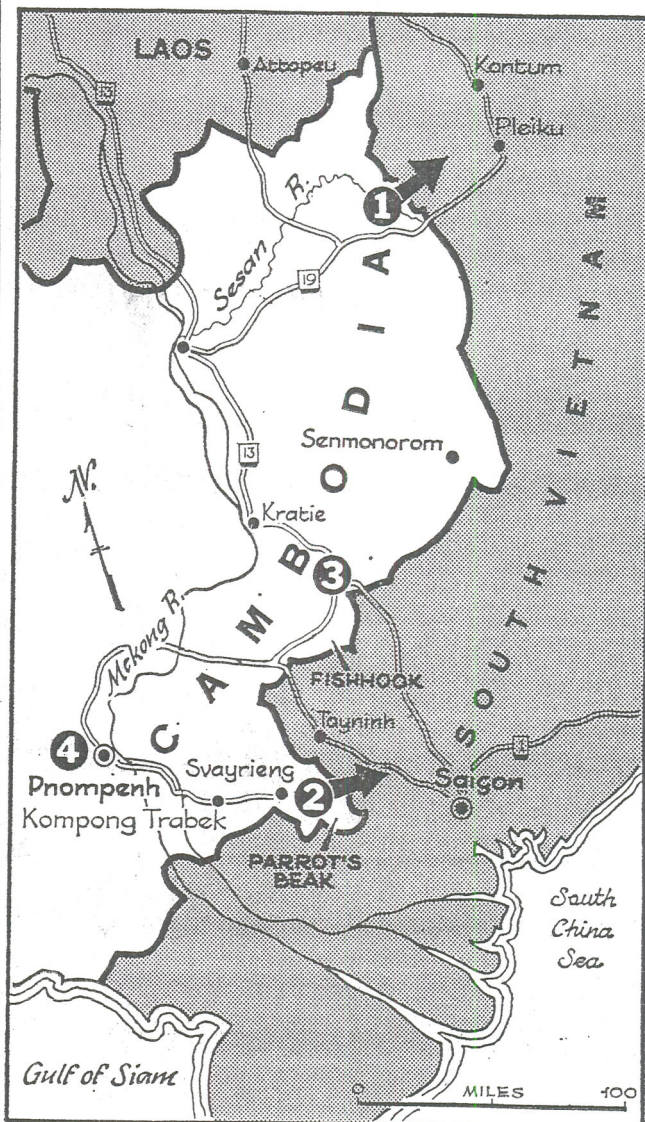
Air Force fighter-bomber pilots had reported destroying a few armored cars in the Sesan base area, but the largest enemy weapons officially declared to have been found in the far southern area have been three wheel-mounted 14.7-mm. heavy anti-aircraft machine guns.

"We certainly didn't expect to find those tanks there," said one intelligence officer.

Search of Caches Goes On

No large new quantities of supplies were reported uncovered as allied troops mostly continued during the day to search out limited areas around already discovered cache sites.

Late yesterday, soldiers of the United States Fourth Infantry Division four miles inside Cambodia in the Sesan area fought off a small group of enemy defenders of a cache site and discovered a two-and-



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Some U.S. troops were withdrawn from Cambodia from the Sesan area (1) and the Parrot's Beak (2). An American base near the Fishhook region (3) came under assault. The South Vietnamese rescue flotilla left Phnompenh (4).

a-half ton store of arms and ammunition, including 15 heavy .51-caliber anti-aircraft machine guns, 200 bolt-action rifles, 200 pistols and several hundred hundred rounds of mortar ammunition.

Military officials here did not list the total amounts of captured enemy supplies, but they did assert that 6,741 North Vietnamese and Vietcong soldiers had been killed thus far in Cambodia. They reported South Vietnamese losses at 330 killed and 1,471 wounded. American losses were put at 101 killed and 427 wounded.

Most of the fighting reported in Cambodia was light and scattered last night and today. In one battle, soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division fought for five hours against an enemy force of unknown size two-and-a-half miles inside Cambodia and 23 miles northwest of Tay Ninh city. They found 13 dead North Vietnamese soldiers on the battlefield and reported their own losses as 4 killed and 44 wounded.

Four helicopters were reported shot down by enemy ground fire in South Vietnam yesterday. Thirteen American soldiers were killed and five wounded.

Attack Repulsed by G.I.'s

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Special to The New York Times

FIRE BASE BROWN, Cambodia, May 13—North Vietnamese saboteurs snipped the wires of warning flares and mines this

morning and slipped through the barbed wire protecting this exposed American artillery base three miles inside Cambodia and 95 miles north of Saigon.

Enemy troops in the nearby woods laid down a barrage of mortar and automatic-weapon fire while dozens of others rushed the inner defenses. They ran into heavy fire from the defenders, who also called in artillery support and air strikes.

At dawn the bodies of 59 enemy soldiers could be seen sprawled in the red dust and in the jungle. One American had been shot dead while trying to carry ammunition to a mortar emplacement, and eight others had been wounded.

The attack was believed to have been the first major enemy assault on a fortified United States position inside Cambodia. During the night there also were at least three other enemy probes of night defensive positions of American companies in this region northwest of the Fishhook. The casualties in those actions were not yet known.

It seems likely that there will be more such attacks, now that the enemy has had a chance to recover from the initial surprise of the American offensive into Cambodia, according to Col. Carter Clarke, commander of the Second Brigade of the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

"The fighting here will probably turn out to be much the

same as in Vietnam," he said. "It's the same terrain, the same enemy and the same us."

At Fire Base Neal, north of Fire Base Brown and about 10 miles inside Cambodia, the commander, Lieut. Col. Maurice Edmonds surveyed the dense surrounding area and said: "We expect they'll attack."

Finding supply caches rather than killing enemy troops is the major objective, according to Colonel Edmonds. "Our mission is not body count—we are cache-counters now," he declared.

Pullout Decisions Explained

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 13 —

A Pentagon source, commenting today on the first withdrawals of American troops from Cambodia, suggested that the Sesan area had proved "less productive" than some of the others in terms of supply caches.

As for the withdrawal from the Parrot's Beak area, he noted that the thrust there was primarily a South Vietnamese effort and that American troops had been moved in temporarily to help "clean up" one specific locality.

Since the Administration had made clear that some American troops would be withdrawn from Cambodia this week, the source said, Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, the United States commander in Vietnam, picked those areas that he regarded as least vital.